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SUBJECT: READOUT OF BAKU BSEC MEETING

11. SUMMARY: Azerbaijan hosted the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Forum October 20-22. This was Azerbaijan's last act as chair of the BSEC, as the baton was then passed to Bulgaria. Highlights included appearances by Turkish FM Davutoglu and Armenian DFM Kirakossian. Both of their appearances were without incident. Three Memorandums were postponed to the next meeting, one between BSEC and the Central European Initiative) Executive Secretariat, the second between BSEC and the Danube Commission, and the third between BSEC and the United States. End Summary.

Turkish FM and Armenian DFM in the Spotlight

12. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (in town to repair Turkey-Azerbaijan relations in the wake of the Turkey-Armenia rapprochement) made an appearance at the BSEC meetings and said that Turkey wanted to see more effort and cooperation at BSEC, and for the BSEC to be made more efficient. Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Arman Kirakossian repeatedly thanked Azerbaijan for organizing the meeting, and encouraged cooperation among BSEC countries. Davutoglu and Kirakossian's participation took the spotlight, and evening news coverage was devoted solely to the two.

From Each Nation, A Different Viewpoint

13. Many delegates emphasized their determination to make the BSEC more efficient and effective. Turkey, Moldova, Albania, Georgia, Greece, and Romania supported the BSEC transportation initiatives. The representatives from Ukraine repeatedly mentioned the need for efficiency and effectiveness within the BSEC. Climate change was only mentioned by the Greek representative. The Russian representative complained that observer countries were not doing enough to support BSEC.

14. Georgian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs David Jalagania complained that the Russia Federation is not in compliance with BSEC rules. He said Russia has closed its borders with Georgia, and is occupying Georgian territory.

He noted that through hard work and the help of the USG, Georgia has persevered despite Russia's actions. Finally, he also emphasized the importance of the Nabucco pipeline.

¶15. Polish Ambassador to Baku Krzysztof Krajewski stated that BSEC was important to his country, and that Poland supports creating stronger ties between Eastern and Southeastern European countries and the EU.

Memorandums Postponed to Next Meeting

¶16. The Memorandum of Intent between the USG and BSEC on Science and Technology was postponed until the next meeting. Two MOUs were discussed, but neither was passed: the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between BSEC and the Central European Initiative) Executive Secretariat (MUCP), and the Memorandum of Understanding of Sectorial Dialogue Partnership between the Danube Commission and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (MUSD).

¶17. Ukraine and a few other countries were disappointed with the lack of action on MUCP, while Russia wanted to continue with discussions and further changes. A drafting committee will be organized to re-write MUCP and the new memorandum will be discussed at the next meeting. A disagreement between Russia and Turkey prevented passage of the MUSD; the Turks insisted on using the word "safety" with regard to transportation while Russia wanted the word deleted. Russia also insisted on replacing "enter into force" with weaker language.

Side Commentary from the EU Representative

¶18. Finally, the EU representative told Poloff that he does not like dealing with BSEC because of its inaction, but rather he prefers to act with smaller groups of interested countries on each issue. He also noted that Russia has told him to work directly with the BSEC, but that in BSEC meetings the Russian delegates block many of the memorandums, and he said "this was a very strange contradiction."

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